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SCOTT
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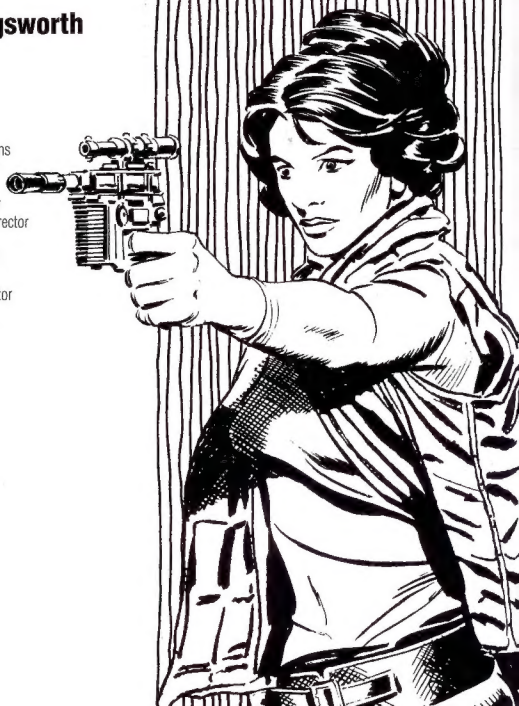
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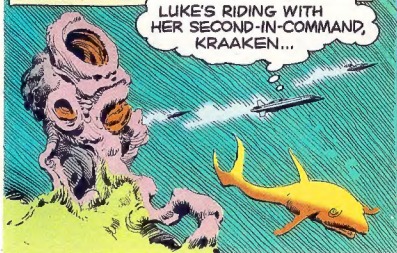
WHAT HAS COME BEFORE

Luke, Leia, and Han have been reunited after their adventure with Tanith Shire, and flee the planet Kabal in the *Millennium Falcon*. A decoy message soon lures them to a dwarf star, which is rapidly sucking ships in orbit around it to their fiery deaths. Their ship trapped, Luke and Han find the source of the message in a wrecked Imperial transport, where Doctor Arakkus awaits them in an artificial paradise. Arakkus turns out to be a survivor of a failed Imperial weapons experiment, and reveals that he amuses himself by luring ships to the dwarf star to be destroyed. Han devises a means to explode the graveyard and blast the *Falcon* free.

The rebels return to their base, only to find it under attack by the Empire. Leia detours them to Aquaris, where they are welcomed as guests in a new underwater rebel base. The base's leader, Silver Fyre, a former pirate and mercenary, has just invited the rebels to participate in an underwater hunt with her and her second-in-command, Kraaken . . .

Unable to talk his way out of the hunting party... Han finds himself partnered with **SILVER FYRE**.

LUKE'S RIDING WITH
HER SECOND-IN-COMMAND,
KRAAKEN...

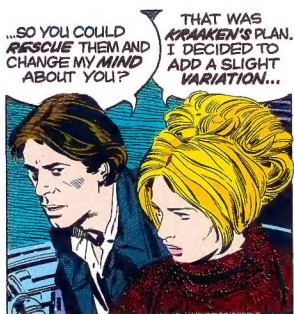
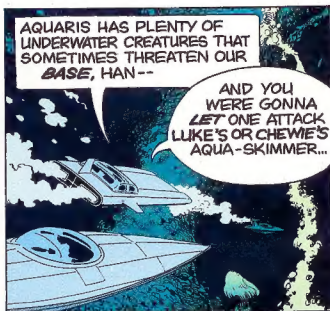
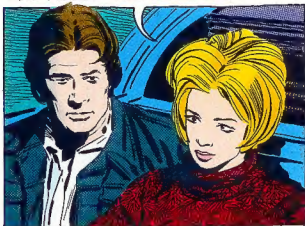


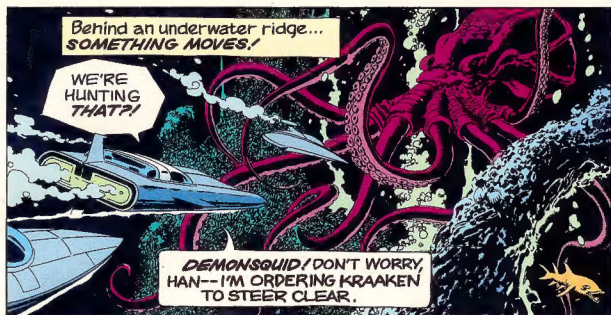
...AND CHEWIE WITH ANOTHER OF SILVER'S PIRATES! I'VE SET THE DROIDS UP AS **BAIT**, BUT NOW THEY'RE **UNPROTECTED** WHILE WE'RE STUCK IN THESE **AQUA-SKIMMERS!**





MY SECOND-IN-COMMAND DID SOME **EAVESDROPPING** YESTERDAY. DESPITE PRINCESS LEIA'S ASSURANCES, YOU OBVIOUSLY WON'T FORGET MY PAST AND ACCEPT ME AS AN **ALLY**.

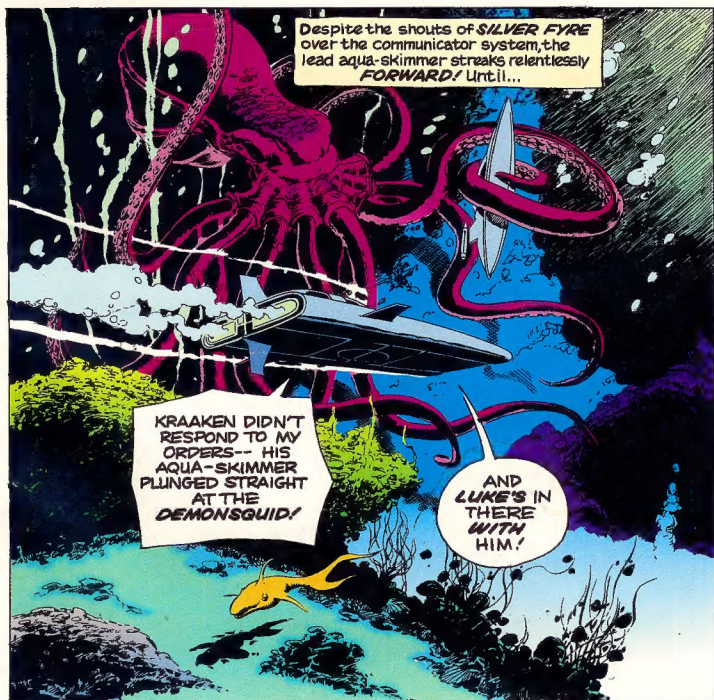




Behind an underwater ridge...
SOMETHING MOVES!

WE'RE
HUNTING
THAT?!

DEMONSQUID! DON'T WORRY,
HAN-- I'M ORDERING KRAAKEN
TO STEER CLEAR.



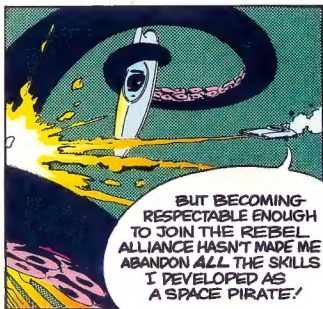
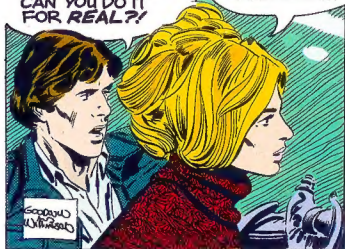
Despite the shouts of **SILVER Fyre**
over the communicator system, the
lead aqua-skimmer streaks relentlessly
FORWARD! Until...

KRAAKEN DIDN'T
RESPOND TO MY
ORDERS-- HIS
AQUA-SKIMMER
PLUNGED STRAIGHT
AT THE
DEMONSQUID!

AND
**LUKE'S IN
THERE
WITH
HIM!**

YOU AND KRAAKEN
WERE SETTING UP A
PHONY RESCUE--
CAN YOU DO IT
FOR REAL?!

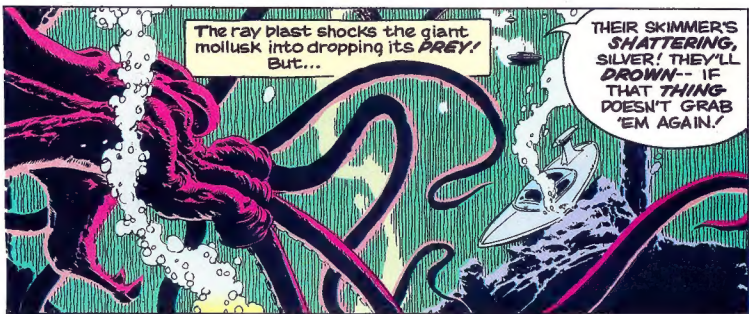
I CONFESSED
TO THAT TO
PROVE I'VE
CHANGED...



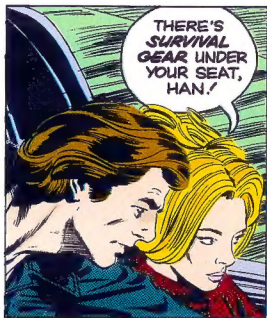
BUT BECOMING-
RESPECTABLE ENOUGH
TO JOIN THE REBEL
ALLIANCE HASN'T MADE ME
ABANDON ALL THE SKILLS
I DEVELOPED AS
A SPACE PIRATE!

The ray blast shocks the giant
mollusk into dropping its **PREY!**
But...

THEIR SKIMMER'S
SHATTERING,
SILVER! THEY'LL
DROWN-- IF
THAT **THING**-
DOESN'T GRAB
'EM AGAIN!

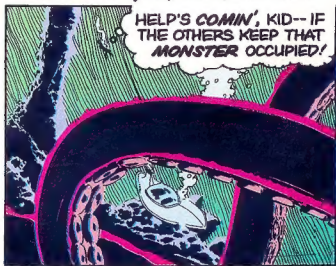


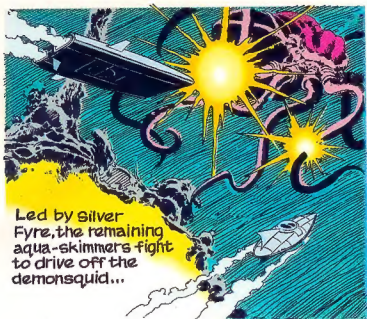
THERE'S
SURVIVAL
GEAR UNDER
YOUR SEAT,
HAN!



Donning it, the Corellian space captain
swiftly exits through the tiny undersea
craft's emergency escape hatch...

HELP'S COMIN', KID-- IF
THE OTHERS KEEP THAT
MONSTER OCCUPIED!





Led by Silver Fyre, the remaining aqua-skimmers fight to drive off the demonsquid...



...as Han reaches the wreck!

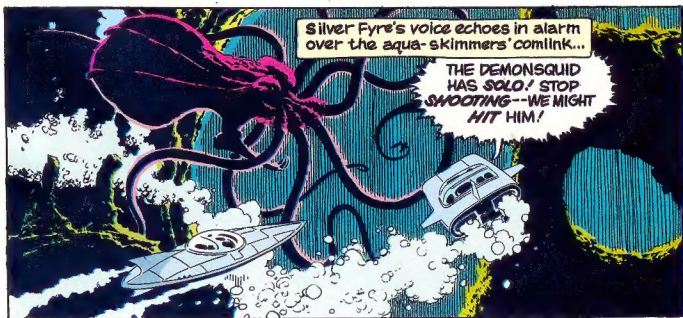
LUKE!



Breaking Luke from the wreckage, Han is clamping a spare survival mask on his unconscious friend...



...When *DISASTER* strikes!



Silver Fyre's voice echoes in alarm over the aqua-skimmers' comlink...

THE DEMONSQUID HAS SOLO! STOP SHOOTING--WE MIGHT HIT HIM!

But if the *MILLENNIUM FALCON*'s captain risks abandoning his aqua-skimmer for an emergency rescue...



...can his *FIRST MATE* be far behind?



And having armed himself with a jagged shard from the wreckage of Luke's craft, *THE WOOKIEE STRIKES!*

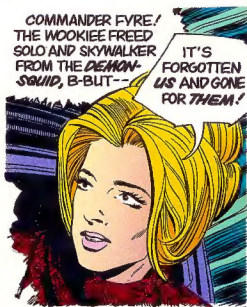
The demonsquid's tentacle spasms in *PAIN* from Chewbacca's attack...



...allowing Han to slip *FREE* with Luke!

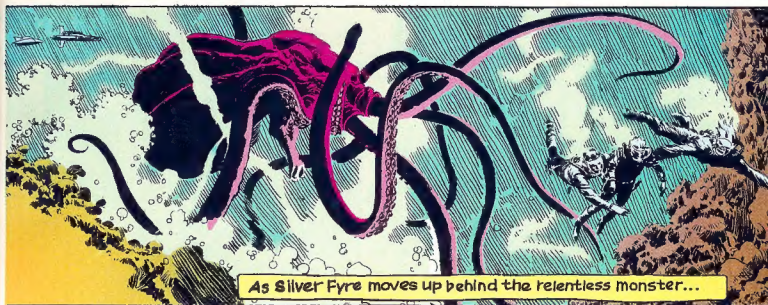
COMMANDER FYRE!
THE WOOKIEE FREED
SOLO AND SKYWALKER
FROM THE *DEMON-
SQUID*, B-BUT--

IT'S
FORGOTTEN
US AND GONE
FOR THEM!

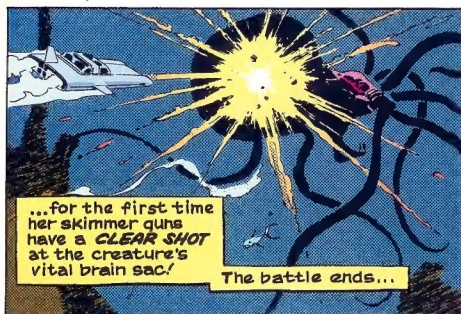


AND THERE'S
NO WAY TO CALL
WHO'S GOING TO
OVERTAKE
WHO *FIRST!*





As Silver Fyre moves up behind the relentless monster...



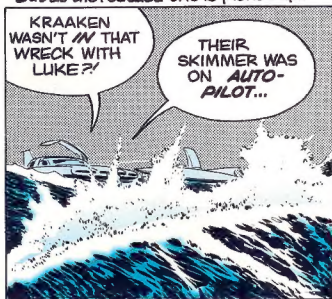
...for the first time her skimmer guns have a **CLEAR SHOT** at the creature's vital brain sac!

The battle ends...

...and the demonsquid sinks into Aquaris' endless ocean depths.



But as the rescued trio is picked up...



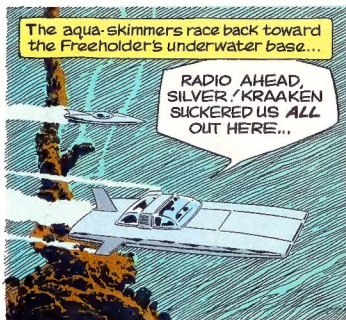
KRAAKEN WASN'T IN THAT WRECK WITH LUKE?!

THEIR SKIMMER WAS ON **AUTO-PILOT**...

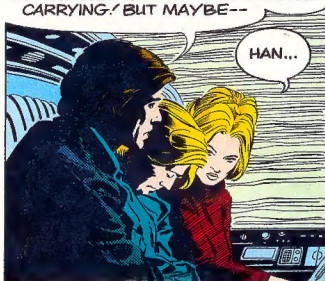
...AND THE KID WAS **STUN-BLASTED** BEFORE THE HUNT STARTED.

I WAS **WRONG** ABOUT YOU BEING A TRAITOR. IT'S YOUR **SECOND-IN-COMMAND**!

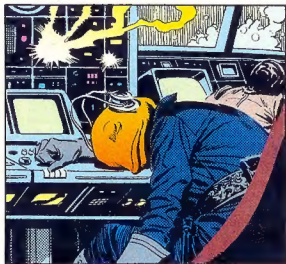


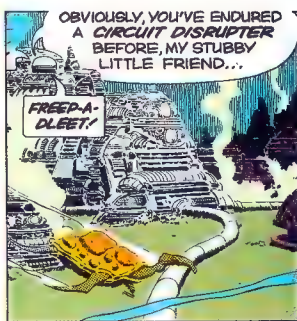
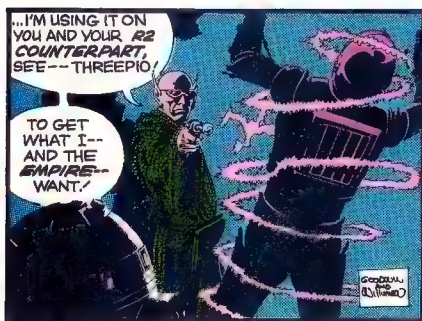
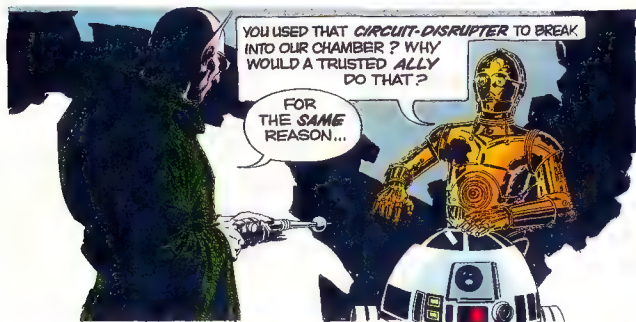


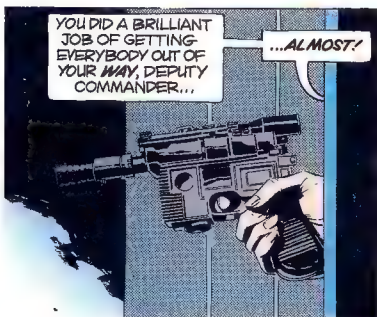
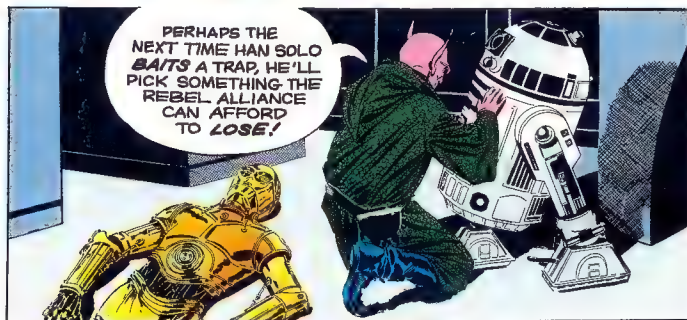
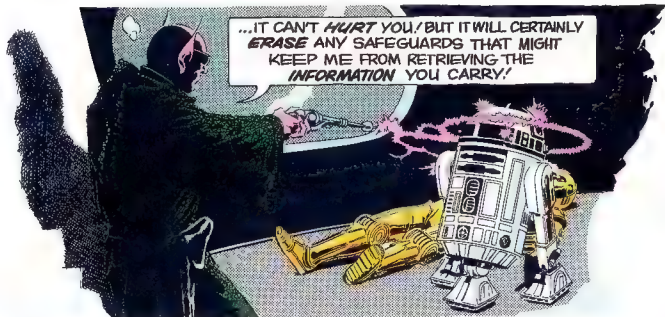
...TO GIVE HIM A CLEAR SHOT AT GETTING THE **SECRET INFO** LUKE'S DROIDS ARE CARRYING. BUT MAYBE--



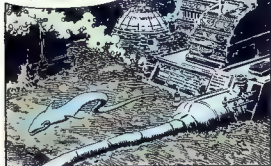
"...THERE'S **NO RESPONSE** FROM OUR COMMUNICATIONS CENTER!"





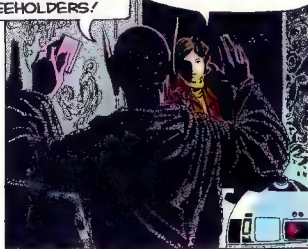


...EVER SINCE THE
UNEXPECTED
IMPERIAL ATTACK
ON KABAL--WHERE
I WAS MEETING WITH
NEW ALLIES-- MADE
ME SUSPECT A
TRAITOR AT
WORK!



THAT ATTACK COULD HAVE
ELIMINATED SILVER FYRE
AND LEFT ME LEADER OF
THE FREEHOLDERS!

A LEADER WHO'D
RATHER SEE THEM
JOIN THE EMPIRE!



I COULDN'T BE
CERTAIN THE TRAITOR
I SUSPECTED WAS IN
YOUR GROUP...

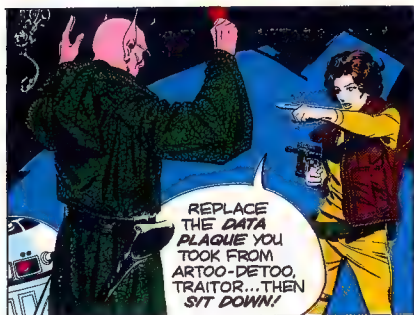


...BUT
OUR DETOUR
HERE WAS
A PERFECT
CHANCE TO
FIND
OUT!

AND I WAS SO BUSY
TWISTING HAN SOLO'S
CLUMSY ATTEMPT AT A
TRAP TO MY
ADVANTAGE--



YOU OVERLOOKED
THE POSSIBILITY OF
SOMEONE ELSE
SETTING ONE!



REPLACE
THE DATA
PLAQUE YOU
TOOK FROM
ARTOO-DETOO,
TRAITOR... THEN
SIT DOWN!

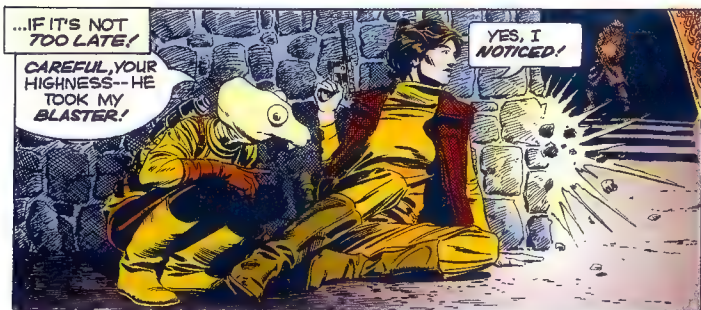
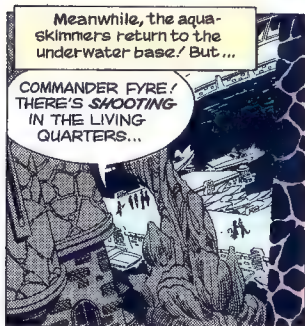
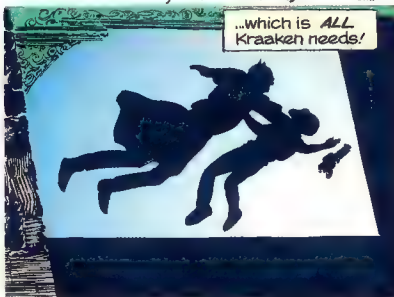
I'M HOLDING
YOU HERE UNTIL
HAN AND SILVER
FYRE RETURN!

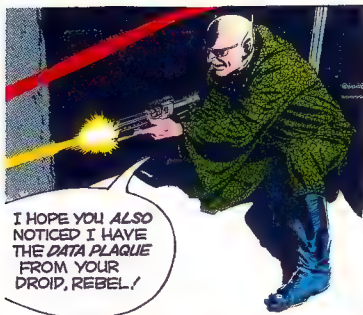


PRINCESS
LEIA! DEPUTY
COMMANDER
KRAAKEN! WHAT'S
GOING ON?!



For a moment the guard *HESITATES*, confused...

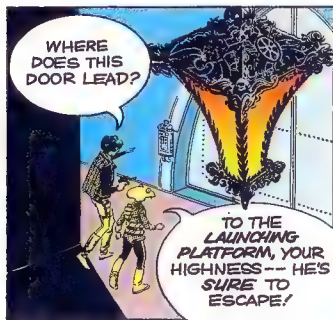




I HOPE YOU ALSO NOTICED I HAVE THE **DATA PLAQUE** FROM YOUR DROID, REBEL!

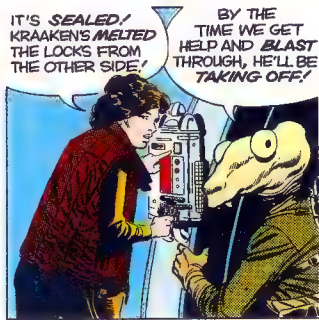


I'M STILL GETTING AWAY WITH THE **PRIZE!**



WHERE DOES THIS DOOR LEAD?

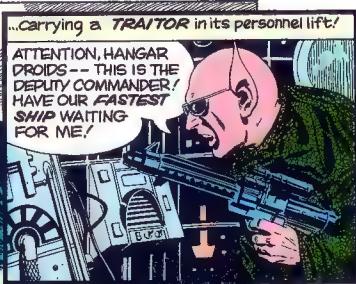
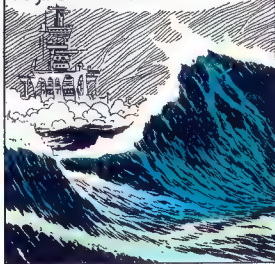
TO THE **LAUNCHING PLATFORM**, YOUR HIGHNESS -- HE'S **SURE** TO **ESCAPE!**



IT'S **SEALED!** KRAAKEN'S MELTED THE LOCKS FROM THE OTHER SIDE!

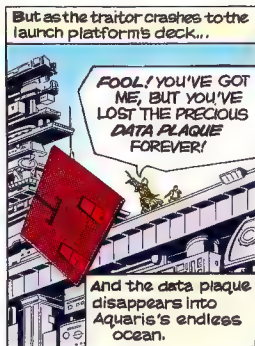
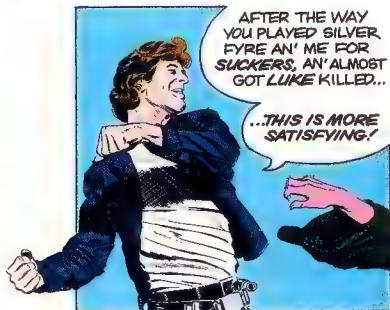
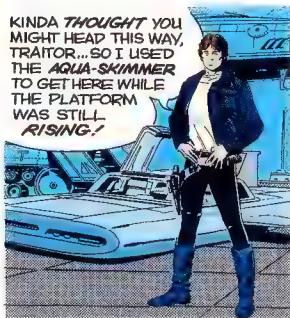
BY THE TIME WE GET HELP AND **BLAST** THROUGH, HE'LL BE **TAKING OFF!**

Somewhere above, the undersea base's launching platform begins to surface...



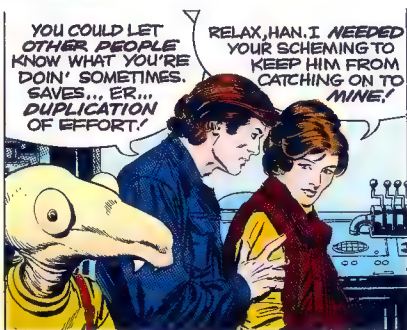
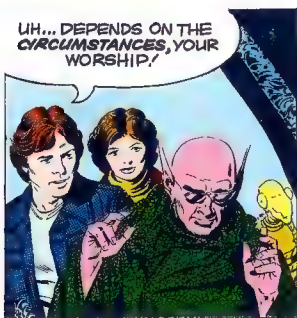
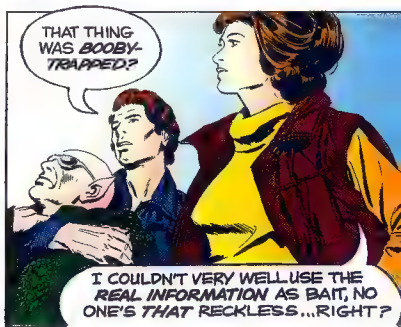
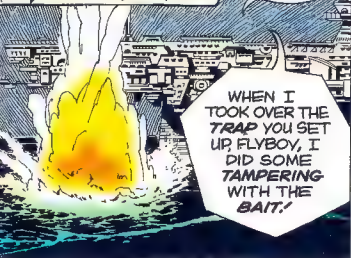
...Carrying a **TRAITOR** in its personnel lift!

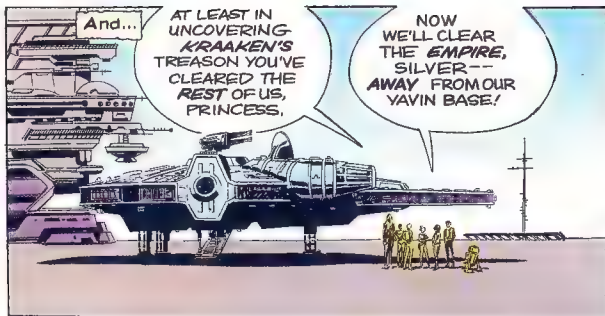
ATTENTION, HANGAR DROIDS -- THIS IS THE DEPUTY COMMANDER! HAVE OUR **FASTEST SHIP** WAITING FOR ME!



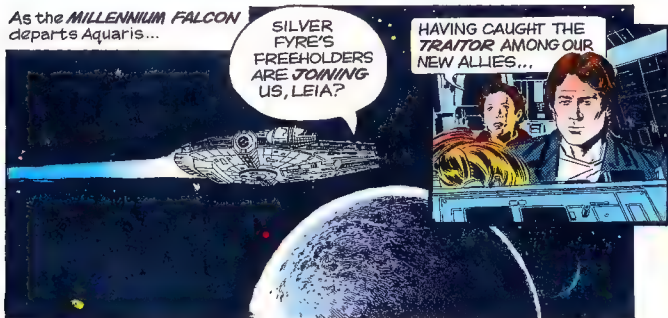


As the water where Kraaken threw the data plaque violently erupts...

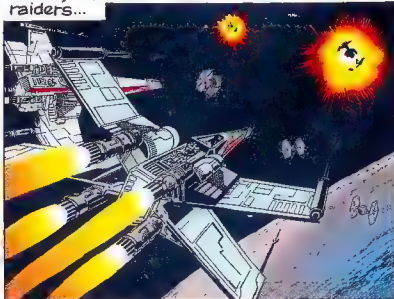


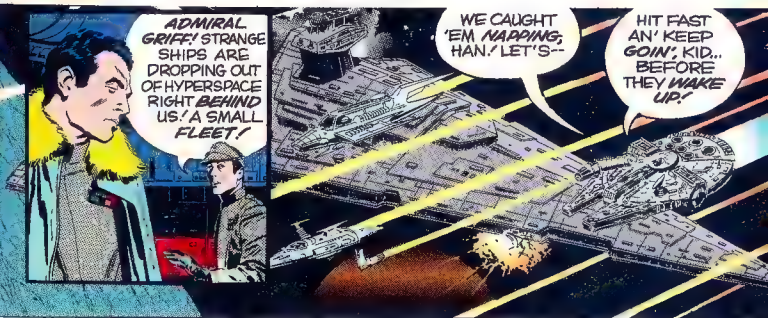
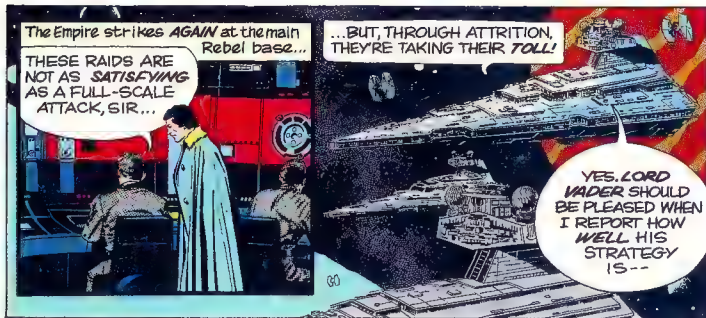
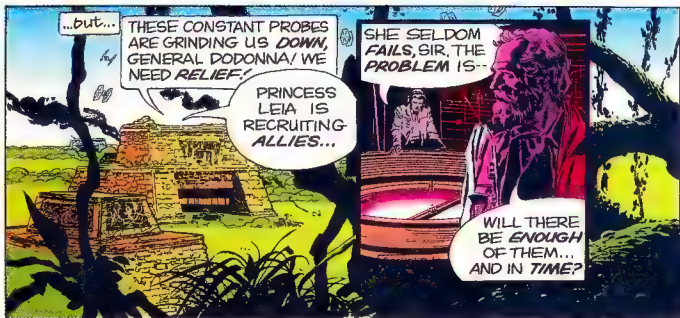


As the *MILLENNIUM FALCON* departs Aquaris...



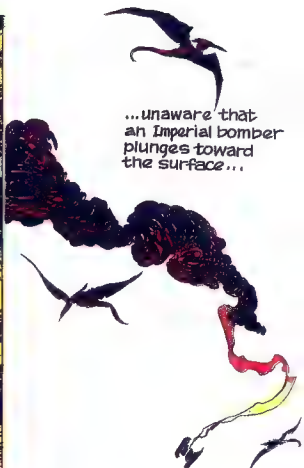
X-Wing fighters drive off some of the Imperial raiders...



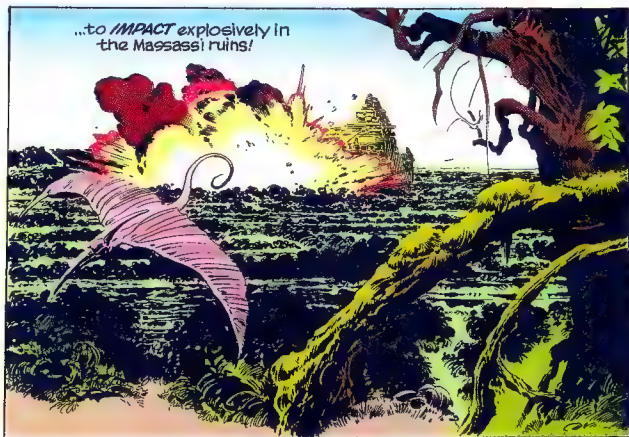




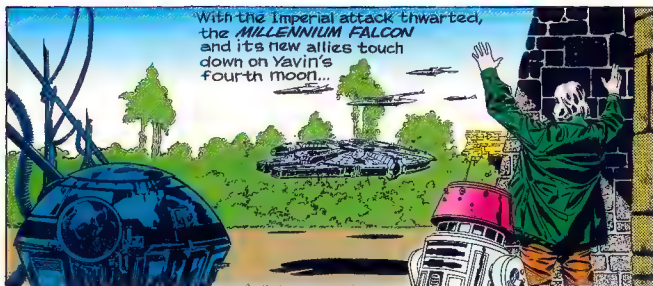
The *MILLENNIUM FALCON*
zooms on to rout more
enemies...



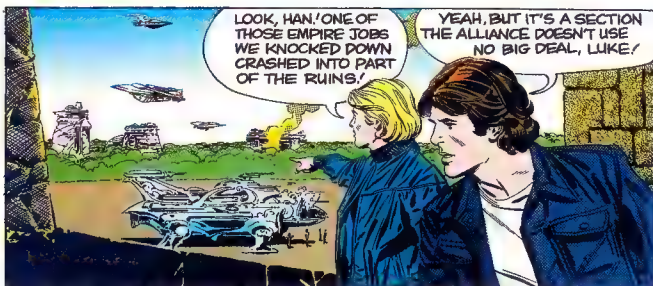
...unaware that
an Imperial bomber
plunges toward
the surface...



...to *IMPACT* explosively in
the Massassi ruins!



With the Imperial attack thwarted, the *MILLENNIUM FALCON* and its new allies touch down on Yavin's fourth moon...



LOOK, HAN! ONE OF THOSE EMPIRE JOBS WE KNOCKED DOWN CRASHED INTO PART OF THE RUINS!

YEAH, BUT IT'S A SECTION THE ALLIANCE DOESN'T USE NO BIG DEAL, LUKE!

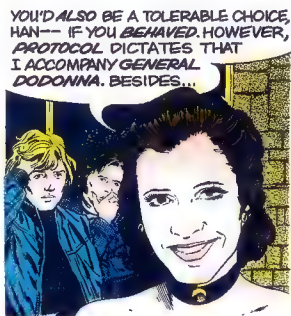
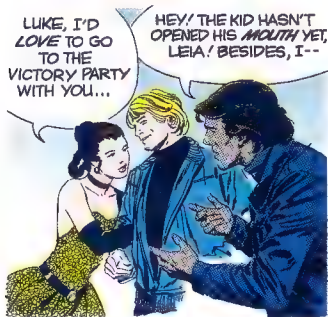
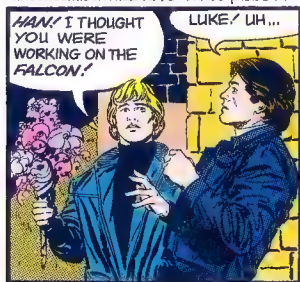


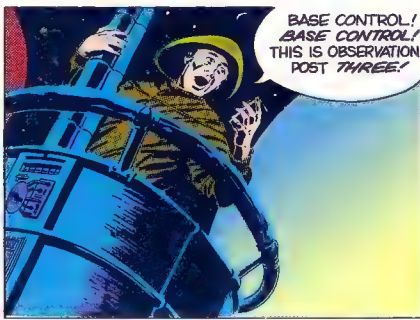
But the explosive impact of the crash has reached far below the surface...

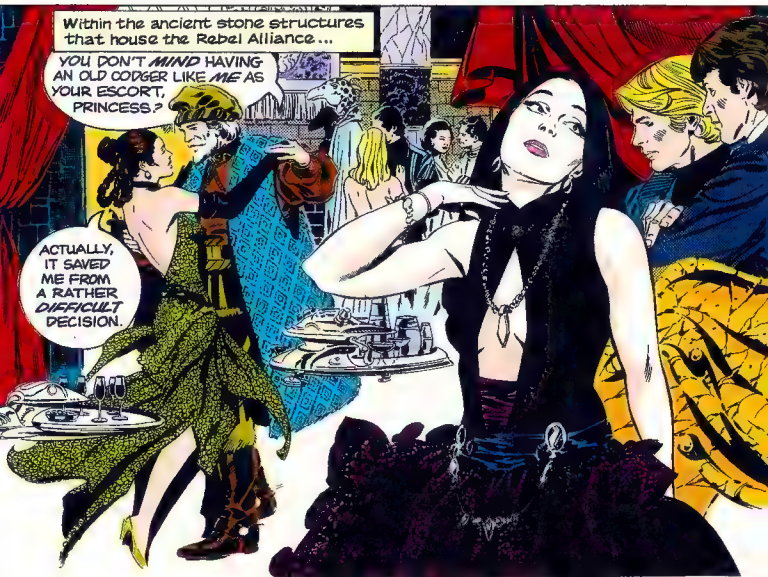
...disturbing **SOMETHING** long dormant!



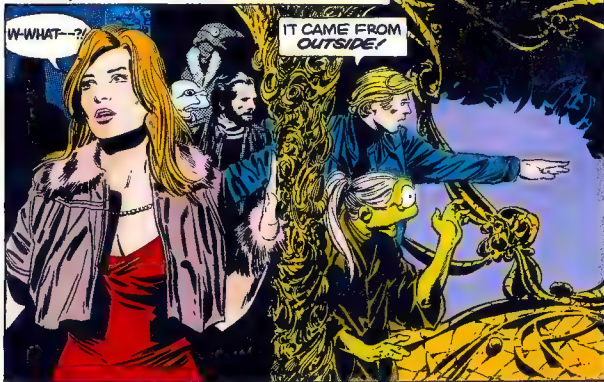
YAVIN BASE COMMAND SECTION. An unscheduled MEETING takes place...

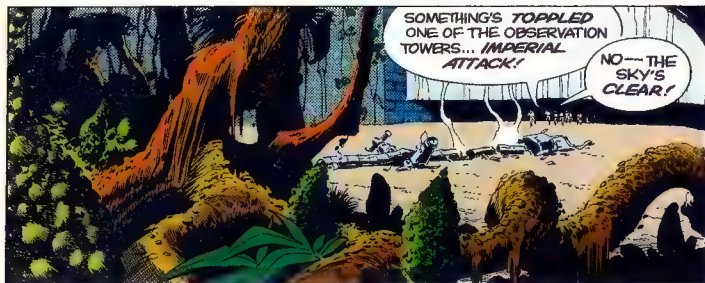






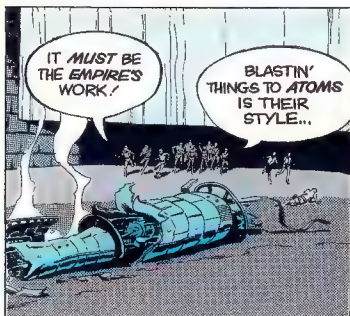
Suddenly...a thunderous *CRASH* shakes the hall.





SOMETHING'S TOPPLED
ONE OF THE OBSERVATION
TOWERS... IMPERIAL
ATTACK!

NO--- THE
SKY'S
CLEAR!



IT MUST BE
THE EMPIRE'S
WORK!

BLASTIN'
THINGS TO ATOMS
IS THEIR
STYLE...

...SOMETHING
SNAPPED EVERY
SUPPORT STRUT
TO TOPPLE
THIS BABY!

WHAT HAS THAT MUCH
STRENGTH, SOLO---
EXCEPT MAYBE YOUR
WOOKIEE
FIRST MATE?!



WHERE IS
CHEWBACCA,
ANYWAY?

I DON'T LIKE WHAT
YOU'RE HINTING,
FRIEND...!

EASY, HAN! EVERYONE'S
SHAKEN OVER THE WAY
THIS OBSERVATION TOWER
FELL...



... NO ONE SERIOUSLY
SUSPECTS CHEWBACCA
OF BREAKING IT!



WELL, I
SAW HIM LEAVE
THE CELEBRATION
JUST BEFORE
THIS HAPPENED.



Chewbacca's search for what inspires his *UNEASINESS* has drawn him far from this evening's festivities.

But the sound of the observation tower's *COLLAPSE*...



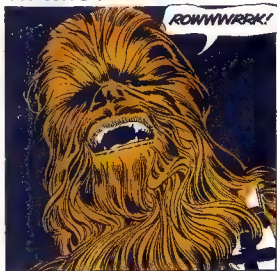
...has brought the Wookiee running *BACK*...

...only to find his way suddenly *BLOCKED*!

Chewbacca has faced dangers of every variety throughout the galaxy, many *LARGER* than even *THIS* one.



Its sudden, ominous appearance inspires no *FEAR* in the *MILLENNIUM FALCON*'S first mate...



ROWWWRRK!



STELLAR scribes

c/o DARK HORSE COMICS • 10956 SE MAIN • MILWAUKIE, OR 97222



More general commentary this month on our *Classic Star Wars* series, *Star Wars* in general, and some rekindled childhood memories:

Jarrold Major
#5-200 Donald Street
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K1K 1M8

I am compelled to finally write you folks in response to your recent publishing of *Star Wars* titles. Where do I start in a letter of this sort? I have never written a letter like this, so I am a little overwhelmed to say the least. Simply put, you people are amazing!!!

I can honestly say I have been a fan of your work since your company's inception, and you have indeed lived up to your lofty label of "The World's Greatest Comics Company." I agree with what "Chicago Red" (aka Anina Bennett) said: you people do offer a wide range of high-quality choices to readers, and I would like to add that you also offer a wide range of talents — from Frank Miller to Cam Kennedy, to name a modest few. I should give you a little bit of background on myself: I am twenty-four years old and I work as a lab assistant at a photo shop. I have read comics since I was about five years old and started collecting six years ago.

My all-time favorite character is Batman because of his dark moodiness and the fact that he is a regular kind of guy. I suppose I should get back on track here and get back to *Star Wars*. I, like many of your readers,

was weaned on *Star Wars*. I accumulated as much of the mainstream paraphernalia, as well as some of the more obscure collectibles, and this is where the *Star Wars* dailies come in.

Our local newspaper didn't carry the entire series, but nevertheless I tried my best to snag the ones I could. Unfortunately my collection had many gaps. I think I actually still have them dug away in some box, and now thanks to you folks I am thinking about turning the house upside-down looking for them. Seriously though, Dark Horse Comics has produced multiple winning series. I think your limited-run series are the most innovative things to hit the comics scene since color.

I applaud you and am looking forward to, if not absolutely longing for, future *Star Wars* installments. I must concur with James Kwak: I think you should definitely print Goodwin and Alcalá's Han Solo series [of comic strips] and perhaps even come up with a Lando Calrissian series based on L. Neil Smith's books. The universe is boundless.

Should I make a crack about a guy that parties all day, then dons a bat costume and swings from the rooftops all night looking for bad guys to scare the beejeezus out of being a "regular guy"? Naaah . . .

Keith Gapinski
5074 Greenway Road
Kissimmee, FL 34746

I have to compliment Dark Horse on its Lucasfilm licensed

titles. All of them are high-quality articles, and I enjoy reading them immensely. I especially find interesting the text pages following the *Young Indiana Jones* stories. They add a lot to the experience of the show and the comic books.

I'm a huge *Star Wars* fan, and it's great to see the return of the heroes in the Zahn novels and in your comics. I'm not that crazy about the story line of *Dark Empire*, but I did enjoy reading it. The whole philosophy of the Force seems to have gotten a bit complicated in the comic. I think it mainly has to do with the return of the Emperor, which I liked, because he was a great villain I'm glad to see more of. But I was uncomfortable with this because I thought the whole point the movies made on the subject of dying was that the Jedi of the light side knew how to become "one with the Force," while the Dark Jedi would only die (hence, "if you strike me down . . ."). Anyway, suffice it to say that the title intrigues me, but I'd like to see the Force simplified a bit in the future.

I love the *Classic Star Wars* title, as I was a big fan of the *Star Wars* strip in my younger days, and Goodwin and Williamson were always my favorite *Star Wars* team. Keep it up! In fact, it was a letter in the *Stellar Scribes* column about the old strip that prompted me to write. I would love to see the Russ Manning and the *Han Solo* at *Star's End* strips reprinted. Some of us fans can't get enough of that kind of thing. Count my vote in!

Thanks for bringing *Star Wars* back to comics in a high-quality

way. I will continue to read and enjoy your books for a long time. May the Force continue to be with you!

Robert Knaus
320 Fisher St
Walpole, MA 02081

Classic Star Wars #3 was terrific. Goodwin and Williamson continue to entertain with great scripting and artwork. Tanith Shire is an interesting new character. I hope she sticks around for a few more issues. The only thing I didn't like about the script was Darth Vader's "secret project." It was just a Super Star Destroyer. No big deal. Well, I'll see ya next month. Have a nice day.

Phillip Di Giacomo
3602 N 72nd Lane
Phoenix, AZ 85033

Just a friendly letter from a fellow Star Warrior who has enjoyed your *Classic Star Wars* books more than you can imagine, I have read, re-read and studied the wonderful art and enjoy the fact how nicely everything fits into the whole *Star Wars Universe*. Of course I agree with everyone else's letters that you have done a wonderful and marvelous job with this strip, and I was wondering if, like with Marvel's *Star Wars* series, Mr. Lucas was consulted on it. Was he on the strip and does he know about *Classic Star Wars*?

Issue #3's letter column contained a nice surprise — a Lucasfilm fan club member finally straightened you people out on the *Star Wars* future of films, which includes the prequels but also three other sequels after *Jedi*. Both of us have recently gotten our letters pub-

lished in the fan club magazine recently also. The most current news on the film series, from a recently published interview with George Lucas in the fan club magazine, is that the prequels will start production and will be out from 1995-2000, and Mr. Lucas plans on writing them in the next couple of years. Great work overall. I'm loving every issue. May the Force be with us all.

Be assured that nothing *Star Wars*-related that Dark Horse publishes escapes the scrutiny of Mr. Lucas, but he has not made any specific comments on the series. As to direct input to the original strip? No . . .

And of course, the grand design for the *Star Wars* series has been public knowledge since shortly after the release of the original *Star Wars* film in 1977 — namely, that the series was originally conceived as a nine-movie epic, with the three extant films comprising the middle third of the series. Rumors abounded following the release of *Return of the Jedi* that George Lucas had grown tired of the *Star Wars* universe, and hopes for the other six movies seemed to be dashed for a long period of time. Now, thankfully, it's looking more and more like George's original vision will indeed come to fruition.

Mark Johnson
Salt Lake City, UT

I never write to these kind of things, but after reading *Classic Star Wars* #3 I had to write and say thank you. I was excited to find out that you were re-publishing the old comic-strip version (which I vaguely remember from my childhood). Thanks to CSW, I have many more déjà vu

trips than I normally would have had. I vaguely remember a cartoon version of *Star Wars* on TV. Is my memory playing tricks on me or am I correct? I think I remember a few episodes on Kashyyyk, but I am not sure. I am probably just fooling myself.

Tanith Shire is a babe! You wouldn't happen to have her phone number . . . ? In fact, she is one of the reasons why I like CSW. I feel that one of the reasons that the old Marvel Comics *Star Wars* comic series didn't (and still doesn't) achieve the popularity it could have is that it didn't have the same higher standards that Lucas had for the movies. Aside from being just stupid at times, the women in the Marvel Comics version were just trashy. Scantly clad women are fine for the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue, but they don't fit in with the *Star Wars* image. Sorry about the preaching, but someone has to do it. Keep up the good work and may the Force be with you.

P.S.: I just hate it how Luke is always thinking about Leia. Could you do something about it? I bet Luke felt pretty stupid after he found out.

Since the original strip that *Classic Star Wars* is based on was written more than ten years ago, there's very little we can do at this point to change Luke's motivations — short of rewriting the story. And as has been explained in previous letter columns, the story contained herein actually takes place between the first and second movies — *before* Luke actually discovers his relationship to Leia. I'll bet he *did* feel pretty stupid. And yes I *do* have Tanith Shire's phone number, but Lucasfilm has asked us not to divulge that sort of information.

Dave Michaels
Fairfield, CT

Classic Star Wars is a dream come true! I was worried what I would survive on after *Dark Empire* was over. In my quest for all *Star Wars* material, I always was upset that I could never get my hands on the *Star Wars* newspaper strips. You've now made that possible. Thanks!

In your comic the idea was brought up about adapting earlier strips into comic book form. YES! PLEASE! I've read *Star's End* and I think seeing it in comic form would be another dream come true for me and others!

If the ball really starts to roll with all this *Star Wars* hype building up everywhere, you guys can do some great things (not that you aren't now!). How about some adaptations of other *Star Wars* novels like *Splinter of the Mind's Eye* or even the new *Star Wars* books! If you're not too tired after that, how about a *Star Wars* handbook of all characters, places, etc. (Marvel toyed with this idea, right before they canceled their *Star Wars* comic).

Well, whatever you guys do, I'll be reading it! Keep up the incredible work!

Michael Malaszuk
New Windsor, NY

The only thing I can say is great, great, great, great, GREAT job (did I mention it was great?). Archie and Al did superbly. The art is magnificent. It gives me flashbacks on all the character's attitudes and looks. You mastered what Marvel couldn't do. You brought back the magic of *Star Wars* for me and others. The banter is especially good. I eagerly await issue #4.

I remember the second or

third time I saw *Star Wars* (I was going to remember the first). It was a few months before *The Empire Strikes Back* came out and I was supposed to see *Indiana Jones*. Somehow (I think my dad had something to do with this) we wound up in *Star Wars*. When the screen dimmed and "A Long Time Ago..." appeared, I was overwhelmed. It was the first time in my six-year-old life that I sat quietly through a movie. I never got *Star Wars* off my mind after that.

I commend you guys again on a great job. Well, until Boba Fett wins a Nobel Peace Prize, make mine Dark Horse.

Up until a short time ago, it's been primarily Anina Bennett — not us "guys" — who's been the architect of the *Classic Star Wars* books. We should all commend her.

Tonya K. Henry
4603 NE 80th
Portland, OR 97218

I live right here in Portland, Oregon and I just bought issue #3 of *Classic Star Wars* on Christmas Eve. Then today to my surprise I saw issue #4 on the rack, so I grabbed it and when I finished reading it as I always do in the car on the way home, I read the letters. They were from older fans so I figured you could use a teenager's point of view.

I am seventeen years old and I have been hooked on *Star Wars* for nearly four years. I got hooked on October 29, 1989 at 10:35 PM exactly. I was up in Bothell, Washington with my best friend Amanda, and so we sat down in the living room with popcorn and soda and we watched her set of the trilogy twice through, wrapped in blankets and using her dogs as pillows. About two months after that my parents bought the tri-

logy set. I bought Timothy Zahn's *Heir to the Empire* in paperback. I was mad at myself because I read it in two days. Then I got the next one — *Dark Force Rising*, and I made that one last only four days. I soon got the *Han Solo* trilogy and the original trilogy along with the first three in the Paul and Hollace David series. So I have those and *Splinter of the Mind's Eye* by Alan Dean Foster. Then I have Timothy Zahn's books and audio tape, and the four soundtrack tapes, and just finished my fourth commemorative model (an Imperial Star Destroyer) which I got for Christmas, plus numerous postcards and other paraphernalia I bought from a collector.

My new project is to write the scripts to the films but after a half an hour of *Star Wars* I had seven pages of dialogue and a hand cramp. Since I have now proved to my mother that I know the films by heart she says, "I wish she put that much time and energy into her studies." (She was speaking to my father at the time.)

Another best friend, Mary, loves *Star Wars* as much as I do, only her heart lies with *Terminator*. We have a running contest. It's called who can spend the most on their interest. With me and *Star Wars*, a grand total of \$377.39, with all of the money my parents and grandmother invested as well, included. Her and *Terminator* — it's still around \$250.00, but both of us will keep adding up as long as *Star Wars* and *Terminator* are around.

I guess that's all for now! Thanks for making my life full while waiting for more books and models.

P.S.: I just adore the new "*Star Wars* Showcase." Keep up the good work.

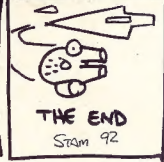
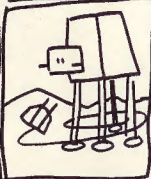
That's it for this month. 'Til next time . . . — Bob Cooper

STAR WARS

S H O W C A S E

a long time
ago in a
galaxy far,
far away...

CHAPTER V
THE
EMPIRE
STRIKES BACK
IN ONE PAGE





DCP

PRESENTS A
SCAN BY

DARTH SCANNER

*Leeching leads to the Dark Side of the Force.
A good Jedi buys comics and supports the industry!*